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MEMORANDUM

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

The Situation in Cambodia

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17 June 1970

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[Redacted Box]
Information as of 1400
17 June 1970
[Redacted Box]

HIGHLIGHTS

The Communists remain in position to threaten a number of provincial capitals west of the Mekong.

- I. Military Developments in Cambodia
- II. Internal Developments
- III. Third Country Activities
- IV. Communist Political Activities
- V. Other Major Aspects

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I. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBODIA

South

1. There is no new information on a possible enemy attack against Phnom Penh. Communist elements of from 20 to 50 men are reported near the Mekong River ferry crossing at Neak Luong, 30 miles southeast of the capital, and government forces there anticipate action.

2. Kompong Speu city is back under Cambodian control, but the Communists reportedly have closed Route 4 again by attacking a military outpost along the road some 45 miles southwest of Phnom Penh.

West

3. The Communists made a second attack on Kompong Chhnang city yesterday and have occupied the central market place and some buildings on the outskirts. Government forces have requested reinforcements by helicopter in order to clear the city. Press accounts indicate the Communists have also closed the Bangkok - Phnom Penh rail line by an attack on Krang Lovea town, 40 miles northwest of Phnom Penh. Railway employees report that three trains are blocked there.

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4. The military situation around Siem Reap remains quiet, but [redacted] the Communists continue to regroup and concentrate forces in the Angkor Wat area.

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5. Communist forces made probing attacks on Tbeng Meanchey, the isolated capital of the northern province of Preah Vihear, on 14 June. The government's position in Preah Vihear is becoming increasingly precarious.

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[redacted] villagers in Oddar Meancney are beginning to lose confidence in the government's ability to withstand any serious Communist attacks there, and some families have moved north to the Thai border, which they intend to cross if the situation worsens.

East

7. No new enemy attacks against Kompong Cham city have been reported,

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II. INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Phnom Penh is considering restructuring its governmental apparatus both in the capital and in the provinces, possibly as part of an effort to broaden the government.

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the government is planning to increase the number of ministers from the present 16 to 20, or possibly more.

[redacted] the pressures of war have so preoccupied the government that several ministries responsible for dealing directly with the people--such as Agriculture and Social Action--were overburdened and becoming unresponsive to popular demands. [redacted] the changes would be made to improve efficiency, not for political reasons.

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[redacted] these plans to increase the cabinet may be largely in response to continuing pressure by youthful, reformist elements, particularly in the National Assembly, who have been somewhat concerned over strong military influence in the government.

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New Political Party

3. In a related development, the government has reportedly decided to establish its own political party and to allow the creation of one or two other parties that, though ostensibly independent, will be controlled by pro-Lon Nol elements. Under Sihanouk, all political party activity was barred, the only effective political

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organization being his personal political vehicle, the Sangkum which the new regime revamped and restaffed shortly after it seized power. Several key army officers, including Lon Nol's younger brother, Major Lon Noñ, are to lay the groundwork for the government party.

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III. THIRD COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

1. The Cambodian Government is concerned about the activities of the large South Vietnamese representation in Phnom Penh.

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2. The South Vietnamese mission in Phnom Penh was originally a small delegation mainly concerned with the repatriation of ethnic Vietnamese from Cambodia to South Vietnam. It has grown steadily since then, as both military cooperation and the refugee problem have necessitated increasing liaison between the two governments.

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IV. COMMUNIST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

1. An authoritative article on the situation in Indochina, published on 1 June in the North Vietnamese army newspaper, has recently become available. As usual in such articles, the author writes under a pseudonym--"Chien Binh" this time. He gives the clearest evidence to date that over the short term Cambodia is the Vietnamese Communists' priority target.

2. After an optimistic review of the "mistakes" allegedly committed by the US and its allies and the "contradictions" they face, "Chien Binh" states that in the last two months "the most vigorous and profound change has taken place in Cambodia, where the balance of forces between the US imperialists and their lackeys on the one hand and the Khmer people's patriotic forces on the other hand has undergone new changes." These "facts," he adds, "which represent a big leap forward and the factors determining victory, constitute a firm basis for comprehensively developing the strength of the Khmer people's resistance and for creating a great, historic turning point in the history of Cambodia's struggle against the imperialist aggressors."

3. Even allowing for the hyperbole often characteristic of the army newspaper's writers, this is strong language indeed compared to normal Communist jargon. "Chien Binh" by no means ignores the "liberation struggle" in either South Vietnam or Laos, but he clearly considers that the most significant and most immediate gains are to be made in Cambodia.

Sihanouk's Peregrinations

4. Sihanouk is continuing his visit to North Korea, which began on 15 June. There is no indication how long he will remain in Pyongyang. Thus far, this trip, like his junket to Hanoi last month, has produced no significant new commentaries on Cambodian developments. Sihanouk's official statements have merely been more dreary Communist-style diatribes against Lon Nol and his allies.

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V. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. The three-nation task force (Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia) appointed by the mid-May Djakarta conference on Cambodia to seek support for reactivation of the International Control Commission and for convening a broadly based conference has so far received little encouragement.

2. UN Secretary General U Thant, who received the three delegates last week and who had himself earlier .. and unsuccessfully surfaced an initiative for a conference on Indochina, promised to support their efforts when he visits Moscow in a few days. He asked that they see him again when they finish their round of consultations. However, members of the Security Council who were approached by the task force expressed reservations about any UN action on the Cambodian problem--one of the possibilities considered by the Djakarta conference.

3. The task force expected little assistance in Moscow, where its members were scheduled to talk yesterday with Gromyko. On 10 June the director of the Southeast Asia Countries Division of the Soviet foreign ministry gave no encouragement in talking with the chief of the Malaysian mission in Moscow. He said that the "result of the proposed visit would be negative as the Djakarta conference had been negative." He added that, as co-chairman of the 1954 Geneva conference, the USSR "would not agree to hold a Geneva conference or any other form of international conference," because both North Vietnam and Communist China are opposed. As for reactivation of the International Control Commission, the official said the Soviet Union is "not agreeable" and that Poland is definitely opposed.

4. From Moscow, the task force goes to New Delhi, where soundings indicate the atmosphere will be cool. Then the delegation goes to London and on to Paris, where the three envoys will try to contact Communist China and North Vietnam through the French Government. The task force also plans to visit Warsaw, Ottawa, and Washington before returning to the UN. It expects to conclude these consultations by 4 July.

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